DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 230 512 SP 022 323

AUTHOR Goodman, Jesse
TITLE An Analysis of the Relationship between University Coursework and Field-Based Experience: A Question of Relevance.
PUB DATE Apr 83
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Canada, April 11-14, 1983).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Content Analysis; *Curriculum Development; Educational Theories; Elementary Education; *Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; Relevance (Education); *Student Attitudes; *Student Teachers; Teacher Behavior; Teacher Education Curriculum; Teacher Role; Teaching Experience

ABSTRACT

Student teachers were observed at their practicum sites and in their university courses to determine the relationship of education courses to field experiences in an elementary education program designed to integrate these two components. The curriculum and nature of instruction found at the practicum sites were highly structured, predetermined, and mechanistic. Bringing children to a certain academic level within a prespecified time period appeared to be the purpose of schooling, and the emphasis was predominately on reading. Most students' major concern was on the product, not the process, of education. Most professors in the university classes supported the emphasis on the basic skills approach to reading, as well as the emphasis on organization and a managerial conception of teaching. A passive attitude toward curriculum development was supported in most education courses. Professors rarely asked students to seriously question what was important to teach in different subject areas. Students were encouraged to see that their job, as teachers, was to implement, not design, curriculum. Philosophical, social, and political criteria upon which curriculum decisions are based are discussed, and their implications for teacher education are examined. Four pages of references are included. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED230512

An Analysis of the Relationship Between University Coursework and Field-Based Experience: A Question of Relevance

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Jesse Goodman
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Jesse Goodman
Washburn University
Topeka, Kansas 66621

A paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, April, 1983.

SP022323

ABSTRACT

This paper reports the findings of an ethnographic study that explored the relationship between university education coursework and field-based student teaching in a program designed to integrate these two components. The paper portrays the way in which these two components were interrelated, and it analyzes the effect of this relationship upon the professional education of these student teachers. Finally, it discusses the implications of the study's findings for teacher educators and researchers.

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNIVERSITY COURSEWORK AND FIELD-BASED STUDENT TEACHING: A CURRICULUM CRITIQUE

One of the most often heard criticisms of teacher preparation curriculum is that education courses in the university are not relevant to the needs of the teachers in the classroom (e.g. Hermanowicz, 1966; Lortie, 1975). Pre-service students[1] complain that their education courses fail to address their concerns. Recent research in the area of student perspectives and concerns suggest that, for the most part, students are preoccupied by a survival-oriented mentality. During their pre-service education, students are primarily interested in learning the routines and mastering the techniques required to teach in their field placements (e.g. Fuller and Bown, 1975; Katz, 1972). These field experiences principally contribute to students' utilitarian perspectives. According to this research, getting the children through the lesson on time in a quiet, orderly fashion is the main focus of students' efforts (e.g. Gibson, 1976; Tabachnick et al., 1979-80; Iannaccone, 1963; insert author's name, 1982). As a result, students want to learn the skills that will help them achieve this singular goal.

In an effort to be more relevant to the students' concerns, a number of educators have suggested that teacher preparation curriculum be congruent with the field-based experiences of students. Some of the primary spokespersons for this point of view have been Frances Fuller and her associates.

> The thought even occurs to us that only (quoted emphasis) survival training should be offered during pre-service education and that all of the sophisticated substance of professional education ought to be offered during the in-service years (Fuller et al., 1973 pp. 46-47).

The assumption behind this suggestion is that meeting the students' immediate needs will help them grow, and later they will develop more substantive concerns. In recent years, a number of programs have begun to teach education courses in conjunction with field-based experiences to specifically increase the relevance of their curriculum (e.g. Lumpkins, 1979; Hovey, 1976; Robinson, 1977; Crowder, 1978). Today, nearly all teacher education programs in the United States contain at least some type of early (pre-student teaching) field experience that is integrated into existing preparation courses (Ishler and Kay, 1981).

Despite this concern for relevance and the development of these programs, there is little research that directly analyzes the relationship between university coursework and field-based practice teaching. Is the content of these courses relevant to the students' field experiences? If so, in what way are they connected and what are the effects of this association on the preparation of pre-service students? In addressing these questions, this paper reports the findings of a study that explored the relationship of education courses to the field experience of students in a program designed to integrate these two components. In addition, the paper discusses the implications of the study's findings for educators and researchers.

Methodology and Sample Selection

The methods used to collect and analyze data were those associated with field studies (Glaser and Strauss, 1975; Bruyn, 1966). Observations and interviews (both formal and informal) were the two main methods of data collection. In addition, the program's literature was reviewed, e.g. course syllabi, student and faculty handbooks, college catalogue, and weekly newsletter. Data were recorded in field notes during a six-month period, two university quarters.[2]

The sample was located in the Elementary Education Program (EEP) at State U., a large southeastern university (all names are fictitious). This program was divided into two teams each containing 80-100 students. Ten representative students from Team I were observed in their practicum sites and university courses. Two students who were student teaching full-time were also observed. Each student was observed in their practicum site one to four times, and each observation lasted between two hours and the entire school day. Approximately 40% of all class sessions conducted during the fall and spring quarters in Team I were observed. The syllabus for each subject area in Team I was read, and completed assignments of twenty randomly chosen students in Team I were examined. The purpose of these observations was to discover what actually happened in the field placements and university classrooms. Rather than predetermining specific items to look for, a number of general questions were used to initially guide these observations: How is each setting organized? What type of interpersonal dynamics exist? How do the students, cooperating teachers, faculty members, and pupils act? What activities occur in each setting? What topics are discussed, and what information, opinions, and/or beliefs are exchanged between the participants? More specific observation questions were developed from reviewing notes as the field work continued. These observations not only illuminated what happened in each setting, but they also gave insight into how these two components interacted.

Systematically scheduled interviews were conducted with 18 students from Team I including the twelve mentioned above, on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Each faculty member in Team I was interviewed, as well as twelve cooperating teachers and three school principals. In addition, other students and faculty members in both Team I and II were informally interviewed. Students

were interviewed before and after each field placement observation, and students and/or faculty members were often interviewed immediately following a given class session. Much of this interviewing was conducted using Glaser and Strauss' (1975) notions of "theoretical sampling" and "constant comparative method" of analysis. Interviews were not organized into specific predetermined questions. Instead, interviews were structured around various areas of concern such as: the purpose of each component in the eyes of the participants; perceptions of what happens in each setting; individual responses to the organization, people, activities, and topics addressed in each setting; effects of each setting on the education of the students; perceptions of needed changes; and perceptions of the relationship between program components. After reviewing field notes, more specific questions emerged and were then asked during interviews to gain deeper insight into situations and to clarify ambiguities and misconceptions. Responses from representative students and faculty members in Team I were cross checked with additional individuals in Teams I and II.

As a result of these observations and interviews, the analysis examined the relationship between university coursework and the students' field-based experiences. The themes, ideas, and concepts that formed the basis of this analysis emerged from reviewing field notes. For example, the focus of relevance as a basis for curriculum was not a predetermined area of concern. Its importance emanated as the field notes were analyzed. Finally, the participants were given the opportunity to respond to the study's findings before a final draft was written.

The Findings

The education courses within the EEP reflected nine areas of study, each organized around a specific body of knowledge: Teaching Reading,

Teaching Language Arts, Teaching Science, Teaching Math, Teaching Art, Teaching Music, Teaching Social Studies, Psychological Foundations of Education, and Curriculum Development. The first seven courses reflected those subjects taught in the public schools. The focus was on giving students enough knowledge of methods and content to begin teaching these subjects to children. The last two areas provided background knowledge in the fields suggested by their titles.

The components of the program were not designed to be mutually exclusive. To the contrary, each setting was integrated into a wholistic education. While students were taking university courses they were also placed in elementary or middle school classrooms from six to sixteen hours each week. Each quarter they were in the program, the time spent in the field increased. The program's literature and structure stressed the importance of the relationship between university coursework and field experiences. These courses were not organized in the customary sense. Traditionally, students sign up to take particular classes and would finish the course requirements within a given time period (quarter or semester). The founders of the EEP, however, felt this structure was too rigid for optimal learning. Instead of being organized around a time schedule, each subject had a list of assignments that had to be completed sometime before the students started their final student teaching. Students attended weekly class meetings which addressed particular assignments. Students usually did not have to attend class sessions sequentially, nor did they have to finish a course started within a given quarter. No one told them exactly which assignments to work on or when assignments had to be completed. This organization ideally promoted student decision-making, and increased the students' opportunity to relate their field experiences to the course assignments. For example, if a student

was placed in a practicum site that emphasized a particular subject area, then that student could work on assignments in the corresponding course at the university.

Most professors expressed that their courses were relevant to classroom teaching. During lectures they often referred to their own experiences as teachers, and many assignments had students work directly in their field placements. For example, most courses had students plan and teach specific lessons and/or units to the children in their field placements. Many assignments asked students to work with individuals, small groups, and/or an entire classroom of children in their practicum sites. Although students felt some assignments were not practical enough or were "busy work," most seemed satisfied that the courses generally related to what they were doing in the public schools.

Although the relationship between these education courses and field experiences was close, the effects of this collaboration were not easily determined. In most cases, the curriculum and nature of instruction found in the practicum sites were highly structured, predetermined, and mechanistic. There were few opportunities for creative activities or open inquiry into subject matter (insert author's name, 1982). The program's literature gave the impression that students would be able to "apply newly acquired curricular methods and theories..." in their field experiences (Team I Field Experience Guidebook). In a number of classes, students were told to "be creative," "try new things," and that there is no one "right" way to teach. In this sense, one might suspect that these courses would help students go beyond the teaching/learning dynamics found in the practicum sites. The relationship between university coursework and field experiences is most clearly illustrated from examining the reading area, the role of students in

curriculum development, and the emphasis placed on good organization and management.

The Reading Area

Of all the subjects taught in the practicum sites, reading clearly prevailed over the rest. In the primary grades, reading and math were the only subjects that received major attention. Many students mentioned that they had taught nothing but reading until their final student teaching experience. Usually, the first and most common task assigned to students was to work with a child or small group with their reading.

In classrooms, most students were observed teaching and/or testing for pupil competency of pre-specified, short-term skills. All of the practicum sites used the same reading program which emphasized a "skill development" approach. Reading was not portrayed as a wholistic activity that involved the child's imagination and his/her relationship to books, knowledge, or language. Instead, it was defined as the mastery of word recognition and rote comprehension skills. Each skill was stated in behavioral terms, workbooks and worksheets were used to drill children on a given skill, and success was measured by quantitative tests (as opposed to more subjective, observation methods). Students were often observed implementing the various steps of the program: 1) Pupils are given a "pre-test" that measures their skill level of a particular skill being taught; 2) Pupils then work on the appropriate workbook pages that drill the children on the given task(s); 3) At the end of the unit a "criterion test" is given, 4) If the pupil passes this test, s/he then takes a "mastery test," and if successful, finishes the unit and begins the next one starting over with step #1; 5) If the pupil doesn't pass the "criterion test," s/he is given "booster activity" worksheets that focus on that part of the "criterion test" that the pupil failed. This process

continues until the pupil passes both the "criterion test" and the "mastery test" completely. Deviating from this mechanistic sequence was rare. A number of students and cooperating teachers said they had pupils who "know the skills" or who "can read," but because they had not passed the "mastery test," they could not move on to the next unit.

Because of its importance in the practicum sites, students generally considered reading to be the most important education course in the EEP. As might be expected, the reading professors tended to support this sentiment. Both students and faculty took the dominance of this subject over other possible elementary subjects for granted. This rather crucial issue was never discussed in any of the class periods observed. When students were asked if they felt this dominance was educationally sound, despite their answers, they all said it was the first time anyone had directly asked them that question.

Along with supporting the importance of reading over other subjects, most reading professors legitimated the basic skills approach found in the field placements. As Dr. Magie stated in her introductory lecture, "Basal texts are used in over 85% of all the nation's schools. By the end of this class, you should have a pretty sound basis for using them in your classroom" (observation of reading class). While some professors objected to the heavy emphasis on testing, most supported the general idea that the best way to teach children to read was to drill them on sequentially ordered skills. The basic goals, assumptions, and educational implications of this approach were not explored in class sessions. For example, a number of times students commented that the children in their practicum sites seemed bored when they worked on their reading. Instead of using this observation to question the definition and/or purpose of this "skills development" approach, the discussion focused on the technical problem at hand. Throughout the quarter,

Dr. Heine, who was considered by many students to be the best teacher in Team I, often gave students tips on how to motivate pupils through the use of games, "tricks of the trade," and detailed lesson formats. Since he was responding directly to the students' concerns, they saw this as a sign of his caring (which was genuine) for both them and their pupils in the field placements. Taking class time to explore pupil alienation, its sources, manifestations, and educational implications might have proved very beneficial in the long run, but it certainly would not have responded to the students' immediate need: getting the children to stay on task. The overwhelming message in these courses was to use a basic skills, basal textbook approach, and supplement it with "fun" activities as a response to pupil resistance.

These professors did recognize the validity of other reading approaches; however, it seemed that "...there isn't time to teach alternatives to students and at the same time prepare them to teach in the public schools" (interview with Dr. Magie). Although students were encouraged to "be creative" and "make reading fun," no one ever analyzed the apparent contradiction between these goals and the mechanistic routine used to teach reading in the public schools. As a result, this on-going practice was supported and legitimated.

Curriculum Development

Generally, the curriculum found in the practicum sites was predetermined and highly routinized when students arrived. Most students had little involvement in curriculum development or decision-making. When math, social studies, language arts, or science were taught, the emphasis was on having children read, recall, and repeat "correct" answers that were found in textbooks.

When asked why they were teaching what they were teaching, students rarely mentioned educational principles or intellectual interest in subject matter. Instead, the most common answers were: 1) the cooperating teacher told them what to teach, 2) the lesson was next in line in the textbook, or 3) the curriculum was required by the governing institution i.e. the school board, principal, and/or state. Teri's experience was representative of many students.

> I get here in the morning a little early, and Mrs. B. tells me what lesson I'm supposed to teach. I find out then because there is only one teacher's manual, and she needs to keep it here (interview with Teri).

Most students had a deferential attitude towards curriculum "experts," people who wrote textbooks, curriculum specialists in the schools, and/or professors. Many students expressed attitudes similar to Sharon's.

> The only thing a teacher has left to do is to be a warm, caring person for the children to relate to. Everything else is pretty much done for you. You don't have to decide what to teach, you just have to learn how to use the materials (interview with Sharon).

Since the public schools provided the necessary curriculum materials, many students never even considered curriculum development as part of their role as teachers.

This passive attitude towards curriculum development was supported in most education courses. For example, many courses had students analyze textbooks or commercial curriculum kits, but instead of looking at those materials critically, the emphasis was customarily on learning how to use and/or supplement them. At times, the message of teacher passivity towards curriculum development was overt.

> Dr. Kendall passed around samples of teachers' planning books. As students looked at the books, he said, "Of course, in some subjects you won't have to worry about planning the actual lessons, but just how to organize them into each day. When you start teaching you'll be given a teacher's manual that will show you how to plan for the whole year" (observation and summary of curriculum course).

Professors rarely asked students to seriously question what was important to teach in the different subject areas of the elementary/middle school. In most courses, students got the message that their job, as teachers, was to implement, not design the curriculum.

In those assignments that asked students to plan lessons or units, most individuals were observed going to a textbook and merely modifying the contents found in the appropriate chapter. While it seemed that in most courses this level of curriculum development was accepted, a few of the faculty expressed concern.

> It's disturbing to see the work some of the students do. I've had several students turn in units on nutrition, and it's often the same boring, textbook oriented, four-basic-food-groups presentation with kids participation limited to filling out ditto sheets (interview with Dr. Mentzer).

Many students made "skill games" or worksheets as enrichment lessons that correspond to the textbook used in their practicum sites to fulfill education course requirements.

When asked if they had ever developed and taught a unit of study in which they decided on the topic, its content, and how to teach it, only a few students said yes. However, even in these cases the format demanded by

most faculty reflected the curriculum design found in the public schools. For the most part, students were required to plan lessons and units according to the Tyler rationale.[3] First, the objectives of the lesson(s) were stated in performance terminology. What was to be learned was highly predetermined and specific in nature. Next, students listed the materials and steps necessary to reach the stated goal(s). Again, these steps were stated in behavioral terms, outlining exactly what pupils would do from one moment to the next. Finally, the evaluation of the lesson's success was solely based on whether or not the performance objectives were reached. Instead of choosing activities that would stimulate children's curiosity or imagination and/or illuminate a concept or issue, the vast majority of activities focused on either drilling or testing the children on specific facts or skills to be learned. The most common criticism found on students' completed assignments was that their planned objectives, activities, and/or methods of evaluation were not specific enough to insure pupil mastery of the given content. The importance of obtaining one's performance goals made it extremely difficult to plan lessons and units that reflected more open ended, inquiry approaches to curriculum and instruction. Therefore, students were rarely encouraged to experiment with genuine alternatives to the standard education found in the practicum sites.

Organization and Management

Due to the heavy emphasis on pupil achievement, in most practicum sites the purpose of schooling was to bring children to a certain academic level within a prespecified time period. Getting kids "through the material" was the primary task of instruction and learning became synonymous with successful completion of workbooks and tests.

> Students were asked to share something from their field experiences. ...Robin said, "Last week I worked with a group of kids. We were reading a story, and the kids were telling stores of their own, but it didn't work out too well because we didn't get through the lesson, and I felt I had failed. The next time I was a lot firmer and didn't let the kids get off the track. We finished everything, and I felt a lot better." Ms. Wagner, the seminar leader, responded by saying, "Wonderful, super...who's next?" (observation and summary of seminar meeting).

The major concern for most students was on the product, not the process of education.

Two factors complicated the accomplishment of covering the material: 1) the quantity of pupils, and 2) their uniqueness as individuals. Most classes had between 28 and 32 children. Within a single class, the children often came from different cultural backgrounds, had different interests, and reflected a wide spectrum of skill levels.[4] It was not uncommon to find three or four "ability groups" in a given classroom.

The effects of completing workbooks on time, and the size and diversity issue were dramatic. Instead of instruction being an activity in which teachers (students) and pupils explore and share knowledge, stimulate interest, and work together towards a commonly arrived at intellectual goal, teaching became an activity or problem of management.

> When I look back at my field experiences, the thing that strikes me most is just how little actual teaching went on. Mostly, you just organize the day - make sure everyone was doing what they were supposed to, passed out worksheets, and graded tests. No one seemed to teach much, we just set things up for the kids to

work (observation of Susie's final conference with Dr. Franks). Students learned how to: organize and manage the day's activities around the curriculum, separate the pupils into their respective ability groups, parcel out the appropriate time for each subject and group, plan so that while they were working with one group the other children were kept busy with seatwork, schedule in specials (music, art, etc.) to keep their disruptive effects down to a minimum, as well as, take care of the daily roll, order materials from the office, supervise the transportation of pupils from one place to another, and finally, keep track of everyone's "progress" (schoolwork).

Students struggled to find management techniques, as they were called, to help them get pupils through lessons in a smooth, quiet fashion. They were observed turning lights on and off, putting names on the board, counting down from ten, sending pupils to "time out" corners, being "positive" (pointing out those pupils who are quiet and on task), keeping score (counting the number of times an individual child "acts out"), etc.

Due to the quantity of field experience in the EEP, each student interviewed said that by the end of the final student-teaching practicum, they were "ready to teach." What most students meant was they had become technically proficient: they had learned how to manage and organize the given curriculum and classroom schedule, and they had learned enough discipline techniques to feel secure in facing a classroom of thirty children.

For the most part, the education courses in the EEP supported this emphasis on organization and a managerial conception of teaching. Students were often reminded in their courses that "being organized" was a crucial aspect of good teaching. Each course taught had at least one assignment that directly addressed management concerns. These assignments, however, did not address the underlying, substantive issues of social control, but rather

focused on management skills to be used in the classroom.

A few students expressed doubts about what was happening in their practicum sites. They knew "something" was wrong, but weren't able to articulate exactly what it was. They seemed to be searching for some workable compromise between their original fantasies of teaching and the realities of classroom life. These students expressed feelings of being torn between their perception that they must follow a set schedule and curriculum and their feelings that they should depart from this routine. However, the substance of these concerns was not addressed in the education classes observed. Instead, these students were advised to "be better organized" or "more efficient" when questions of scheduling arose. Without a sufficient knowledge base to propose and/or support alternative approaches to existing procedures and curriculum, most students wouldn't take the risk necessary for experimentation.

Finally, the structure of the university coursework also supported an emphasis on organization and management. As previously stated, students planned their own assignment schedules. On one level, it seemed that this structure would actually refute the highly routinized environment found in the practicum sites. Originally, this coursework was organized to increase student decision-making, and thus help them see the importance between student interests and learning. However, most students did not gain this insight from this structure.

> I think the best part of the program (EEP) was the coursework. Not the content of each course, but the fact that we had to organize our schedules ourselves in order to get everything done. Learning how to efficiently organize my time has been a big help to me in my teaching. As a teacher, there are so many details you have to schedule in; you have to get your

> routines down or you'll be lost. If there was one thing I learned from the program, it was the importance of being well organized and efficient (interview with Mrs. P., cooperating teacher and ex-EEP student).

While a number of students expressed discontent with this structure because it required them to do extra work (i.e. plan their own course schedules), most admitted that it helped them be more efficient. Therefore, the structure of the EEP's coursework legitimated the heavy emphasis on efficiency, organization, and routine found in most practicum sites observed. Students accepted this emphasis as a natural part of a teacher's job, and the organization of this coursework helped them cope with this situation instead of question its validity.

An Alternative

As the program's literature suggested, the relationship between university coursework and the students' field-based experiences were interconnected. The emphasis of most coursework was on helping students fit into the routines and meet the demands established in their practicum sites. However, this portrayal was not all inclusive. There were a few faculty members who were critical of the public school curriculum and seriously questioned the practices found in the field placements. In their courses they were trying to give students alternatives to the mechanistic education found in the practicum sites.

> I don't know what impact I can realistically have, but at least they'll (students) have some alternatives to the textbook/worksheet/skill list formula that dominates the schools now. For example, one of my assignments asks students to plan and teach a unit that integrates knowledge and activities from a number of

different subjects such as reading, language arts, social studies, math, art, etc. This assignment takes a lot of thought and time if done well (interview with Dr. Mentzer).

There were some students who wanted to learn about alternatives and were seriously questioning what was important to teach children. They were not satisfied with simply being told what and how to teach. While most students simply altered a textbook unit to satisfy assignments of this nature, a few students did create inquiry-oriented units based on their own research and intellectual interests. Although most of these individuals found it difficult to teach their units in their practicum sites due to the necessity of following the standard curriculum, there were a few cooperating teachers who allowed or encouraged students to experiment.

I think the most interesting thing I did was plan a unit on ecology. I ended up doing a lot of my own research on the topic. Along with teaching children the science of how everything is interconnected, I also wanted to teach them about the conflict between business interests and naturalists, and about the history of this struggle. Instead of having the kids read only a textbook and fill out worksheets, I had them make an art display illustrating the balance between all things, they saw a movie about the habitats of wild animals and how they are being destroyed, I brought in a guest speaker from a local environmental group and from the local utility company, and I had the kids read newspaper articles and children's books that dealt with endangered species and man's relationship to the earth. I ended the unit by having the students write poems and letters to the government about this topic. It was neat deciding what to teach and how to teach it. (interview with Judy).

Although most assignments failed to offer real alternatives to the everyday routines and curriculum found in the practicum sites, some students were supported in their efforts to alter this reality.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

The findings of this study suggest that we, educators, must seriously consider the criteria upon which curriculum decisions are made. Like many programs in the United States today, the EEP emphasized the relevance between the students' field-based experiences and their university course assignments. Most students expressed satisfaction that in general their education courses seemed relevant to their needs in the practicum sites. In this sense, the coursework found in the EEP is a positive response to the criticism mentioned at the beginning of this paper.

However, contrary to public opinion, the findings of this study imply that the use of relevance as the main criteria behind curriculum decisions may, in fact, be overemphasized. As Feiman and Floden (1979) point out,

> Addressing current concerns will probably make teachers feel more comfortable and make them feel that their education is highly relevant. But feelings of concern and relevance need not be linked to the attainment of the most desirable educational outcomes.

Although the education courses in the EEP were closely related to the students' field experiences, this collaboration did not necessarily result in an educationally sound preparation program. For the most part, university courses legitimated: the dominance of reading over other subjects taught in the elementary schools, mechanistic skills and predetermined facts as the basis of most subject matter, a closed inquiry method of instruction, a passive role for teachers in curriculum development, and a managerial conception of

teaching. Although the program's literature and faculty members expressed the importance of creativity in teaching and learning, this notion seemed to ignore the uncreative structure, routines, and curriculum that were dominant in the practicum sites. Most faculty encouraged students to be creative by "enriching" what was already being done in the practicum sites; not by questioning the basic value of this education. Substantive inquiry into what's worth teaching and learning, and genuine alternatives to the standard curriculum and nature of instruction found in the practicum sites were rarely part of the program's education courses. Contrary to the view that meeting the students' immediate practicum needs will help them grow into mature teachers (e.g. Fuller, 1971; Fuller et al., 1973), some suggest the opposite will occur (e.g. Stratemeyer, 1956). As Dewey (1904) stated,

> Practical work should be pursued primarily with reference to its reactions upon the professional pupil in making him a thoughtful and alert student of education, rather than to help him get immediate proficiency. For immediate proficiency may be got at the cost of power to go on growing.

The findings of this study suggest that Dewey may be correct in his analysis. By focusing primarily on the students' immediate field-based concerns, the education courses in the EEP promoted a mentality of "excessive realism" (Katz, 1972). Students' tendencies to accept the education found in the public schools as the limits of what is possible was reinforced in most class sessions observed.

As Friedenberg (1973) and others (e.g. Crittenden, 1973; Zeichner, 1981) suggest, the criteria that one uses to determine teacher preparation curriculum depends largely upon one's perspective towards the education of children. There are many educators who are supportive of the basic education that is

emphasized in today's public schools. Many of these individuals are concerned about the efficiency, certainty, and accountability of our children's learning. Recent emphasis on national test scores have made many educators support the drillwork, testing, and dominance of a skills approach to reading in the public schools. Given this support, teacher preparation would emphasize the relevance of their curriculum to the needs of our public schools.

> The preservice student should not be exposed to theories and practices derived from ideologies and philosophies about the way schools should be (quoted emphasis). The rule should be to teach, and teach thoroughly, the knowledge and skills that equip beginning teachers to work successfully in today's classroom (Smith, 1980).

From this perspective, teacher education curriculum should help students meet the educational and institutional demands as defined in their practicum sites.

However, according to a number of critics, teacher education curriculum that primarily focuses on meeting students' field placement concerns, merely reinforces the already mechanistic, largely unstimulating education found in many public school classrooms. If educators are critical of the current education found in most of our schools, then the criteria that is used to determine teacher preparation curriculum becomes more complex.

This is not to suggest that relevance is not an important concern. As Zeichner and Teitelbaum (1982) point out,

> There is nothing inherently wrong with suggesting that the content of teacher education be constructed with regard for the motives and purpose of students... In fact, a teacher education program that does not take student motives into account is probably doomed to failure.

They go on to suggest that the real problem occurs when curriculum is based only or primarily upon the students' field-based needs. The findings of this study suggest that if educators question the present schooling in our society, then the issue of relevance must be balanced with other equally important educational concerns. Based on these findings, a number of recommended concerns should be considered when determining teacher preparation curriculum:

Curriculum Theory and Development - The first factor that should be considered is the role of the teacher in curriculum development. As Ben-Peretz (1980, 1975) and others suggest, it is not enough to teach students how to implement established curriculum (Carre et al., 1977; Connelly, 1972). She and her colleagues argue that in order to make education more meaningful to both their pupils and themselves, teachers need to know how to evaluate the potential and creatively utilize curriculum materials. The work of students such as Judy (see page 17) suggest that we need to teach students how to develop and implement curriculum that is based upon their own intellectual interests, and thus break teachers' dependency on commercially pre-packaged curriculum. Students should be taught how to: choose a topic; develop the themes, concepts, and/or ideas of this topic; research the topic to increase their own knowledge of it; discover resources for the children to use; plan activities that illiminate the themes of this topic and promote interest in continued learning among their pupils; and organize these activities and resources into a cohesive unit of study.

Of course, if students are going to learn how to develop their own curriculum, then their education courses need to address issues of curriculum theory. As part of their coursework, students should be asked to consider a number of theoretical questions such as: What's worth teaching and learning? What conceptions of learning and knowledge are being taught to children

through the curriculum? Who should decide what curriculum is worthwhile for children? What criteria should be used to determine the success for a given curriculum? These and other substantive questions need to be integrated into teacher education coursework.

Philosophical Issues - Another factor that should be considered in developing teacher preparation curriculum is the importance of understanding the philosophical principles that underlie practice. There is a growing concensus among a number of educators that in order to become a truly effective teacher students must develop the ability to seriously reflect upon their teaching and the education of children (e.g. Zeichner, 1981; Van Manen, 1977; Bagenstos, 1975; Elliot, 1976-77). These individuals suggest that educating children is an extremely complex activity that involves psychological, social, interpersonal, as well as instructional dynamics. Without insight into the rationale and principles that form the basis of classroom activity, teachers tend to uncritically conform to the status quo.

The implication of this concern is that university courses need to raise substantive, educational issues that underlie the techniques of practice. For example, in addressing concerns of classroom management the question of social control versus freedom should also be discussed. Specific teaching techniques need to be tied to one's philosophical purposes. It is not enough to simply tell students to be creative or unique in their teaching. Without an analysis of what these messages actually mean, students adopt them as rhetorical slogans without substance. To Judy, being creative implied changing the basic curriculum and nature of instruction used in her practicum site. However, to most students being creative meant designing a colorful bulletin board, making a skill game, or letting pupils draw pictures on their workbook pages. The findings of this study suggest that it is not enough to

only teach students how to educate children, preparation courses must also challenge students to consider the underlying purposes and consequences of this complex activity.

Social/Political Implications - There is a growing body of literature in teacher education that suggests that traditional teacher preparation courses tend to ignore the relationship between education and the broader social context of schooling in society (e.g. Zeichner and Teitelbaum, 1982; Bartholomew, 1973; Giroux, 1980; Popkewitz, 1979). Among other points, these individuals suggest that the drillwork, testing, and emphasis on utilitarian skills that dominate the public school curriculum teach children to play a passive, acquiescent role in society. They argue that schools, for the most part, teach children to uncritically accept authority and that the focus on rote memorization teaches children to disregard their own intellectual powers of thought. These individuals go on to imply that this learned passivity hinders people's ability to challenge the social inequalities of our society. Teacher education curriculum that supports what the public schools do contributes to this social stagnation. In addition, a number of critics have observed that important social and/or political issues rarely get raised within teacher preparation courses (e.g. Apple, 1979; Zeigler and Peak, 1970; Ginsburg and Newman, 1981; Ginsburg and Newman, 1982). Nash and Ducharme (1976) convincingly argue that in order for teacher education to fulfill its social responsibility, courses need to help students become human rights activists as well as warm, empathetic human beings.

Whether these critics are correct in their analysis is a matter of debate. However, their investigations do suggest that the social/political implications of schooling should not be ignored in preparation courses. As Beyer and Zeichner (1982) state, the role of schooling in our society does

not have to be limited to "foundation courses." On the contrary, this study suggests that perhaps the impact of these concerns will be greater if integrated into traditional "methods" courses. For example, when teaching students how to develop curriculum, these courses could stress the planning of learning activities that promote active involvement and thoughtful participation among the children. Reading and/or language arts courses could have students analyze children's literature for sexist, racist, and/or other unhealthy attitudes (Taxel, 1982). In courses that deal with social studies education, students could be asked to reflect upon if and how they would teach their pupils about cultural oppression in our society (Anyon, 1982).

Politics of Teaching - In considering the above criteria for developing preparation courses, educators must also recognize the difficulty of change. As Stake and Easley (1978) point out, more than good intentions and a strong knowledge base about alternatives are needed to change school practices. Constraints to innovative teaching cannot be wished away. Exciting approaches to instruction and curriculum design are irrelevant if there is no hope for implementing them in our schools. Kohl (1976) suggests that future teachers need to learn the politics of teaching. That is, students should learn how to develop a base of support as a first step towards initiating substantive change. They need to learn how to push for change without alienating the vast majority of the community. They need to learn how to make proposals and how to sustain change once it has begun. The findings of this study also suggest that students need to work through their own insecurities towards change. The implication of Kohl's argument is that education courses need to prepare students to be change agents in the schools, and that this factor should be taken into account when developing teacher preparation curriculum.

To summarize, the findings of this study and the literature cited above

suggest that careful consideration is needed when determining the criteria upon which teacher education curriculum is based. Often it seems these decisions are grounded largely upon unexplored, singular assumptions, such as the need for relevance. In addition to asking ourselves, "Is this curriculum relevant to the students' field experience?" four equally important questions should be asked: 1) Does this curriculum promote the students' (teachers') active role in designing and implementing curriculum? 2) Does it help students become aware of the underlying educational principles and consequences of classroom activities? 3) Does it help students become aware of the social/political implications of schooling in our society? and 4) Does it help students (teachers) to become change agents in the schools? If educators are interested in improving the quality of education found in most of our school classrooms, then they need to consider a number of important issues when developing preparation curriculum.

There have been a number of programs described in the literature that suggest some or all of these issues have been taken into account in determining teacher preparation curriculum. Programs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Zeichner and Teitelbaum, 1982), University of Vermont (Nash and Ducharme, 1976), Washington University (Cohn, 1981), and University of Haifa (Carre et al., 1977) are some recent examples. These programs and the findings of this study raise some serious questions for educators to consider: 1) How important is relevance in teacher education courses? 2) Should relevant courses be defined as only those which help students fit into the existing educational practices found in the public schools? 3) Is it possible to be both relevant to the students' practicum concerns and within the same course challenge the standard curriculum and nature of instruction found in most practicum sites? In order to gain insight into these questions, more

research needs to be conducted.

Most studies of teacher preparation programs have focused solely on the student teaching experience. While this work has been helpful, we need to know what happens in the other components of this professional education. We also need to know in what ways different components of a given program interact. Is the EEP's coursework unique in its relationship to the students' field experience? If we wish to develop progressive, creative teacher preparation programs, then we must go beyond our intentions and our ideals. We must critically investigate how these intentions are manifested within given programs.

Notes

[1]To enhance the reading of this paper, the following word guide is provided: Educator - one who teaches or supervises students at the college level, Student - one who is enrolled in a college level teacher education program, Pupil - a child enrolled in an elementary or middle school.

[2]During the first quarter, the author spent forty hours each week conducting field work which included daily review of field notes. During the second quarter, approximately twenty hours each week were devoted to writing up results from the initial analysis of field notes, and twenty hours were spent in the field. For a complete discussion of the rationale, theoretical principles, and methods used to collect and analyze the data see (insert author's name), (1982).

[3]The "Tyler" approach to curriculum development and implementation has dominated school life for the past three decades or more. For a more complete analysis of this approach see Tyler (1950) and Kliebard (1970).

[4]The public schools in which students were placed were desegregated within the last decade. Blacks and whites lived very different life styles, had different values, and spoke different dialects. There were also cultural differences between wealthy/upper middle-class children and children from middle-class/poor families. In addition, because of the different socialization between boys and girls, a number of scholars suggest that they, too, live in different cultural milieus (Frazier and Sadker, 1973). Instead of capitalizing on this diversity, it was seen as a constraint to meeting educational goals.

References

Apple, M. Ideology and Curriculum. Boston: Routledge & Kegan-Paul, 1979.

Anyon, J. "Theory Into Practice: The Practical Implications of Critical Curriculum Theories and Research." A paper symposium presented at the AERA annual meeting, New York, 1982.

Bagenstos, N. "The Teacher as an Inquirer." The Educational Forum, 39 (1975): 231-37.

Ben-Peretz, M. "The Concept of Curriculum Potential." Curriculum Theory Network, 5 (1975): 151-59.

Ben-Peretz, M. "Teacher's Role in Curriculum Development: An Alternative Approach." Canadian Journal of Education, 5 (1980): 52-62.

Beyer, L. and Zeichner, K. "Teacher Training and Educational Foundations: A Plea for Discontent." Journal of Teacher Education, 33 (1982): 18-23.

Bruyn, S. The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation. Englewood Cliffs, N J: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

Carre, C., Ben-Peretz, M., and Sutton, C. "Application of the Concept of Curriculum Potential in Initial and In-Service Training." Studies in Education, 17 (1977): 89-100.

Cohn, M. "A New Supervision Model for Linking Theory to Practice." Journal of Teacher Education, 32 (1981): 26-30.

Connelly, M. "The Function of Curriculum Development." Interchange, 3 (1972): 161-177.

Crittenden, B. "Some Prior Questions in the Reform of Teacher Education." Interchange, 4 (1973): 1-11.

Crowder, A. "A Field-Based Program for Graduate-Undergraduate Professional Preparation." ERIC Document #ED155133 SP012490, 1978.

Dewey, J. "The Relation of Theory and Practice in Education." In the Third NSSE Yearbook, Part I. Bloomington, IL: Public School Publishing Co., 1904

Elliot, J. "Developing Hypotheses About Classrooms form Teachers' Personal Constructs." Interchange, 7 (1976-77): 1-22.

Feiman, S. and Floden, R. "What's All This Talk About Teacher Development?" A paper presented at the annual AERA meeting, San Francisco, 1979.

Frazier, N. and Sadker, M. Sexism in School and Society. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

Friedenberg, E. "Critique of Current Practice." In New Perspectives on Teacher Education, edited by D. McCarty. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973.

Fuller, F. Relevance for Teacher Education: A Teacher Concerns Model. Austin: University of Texas R&D Center for Teacher Education, 1971.

Fuller, F. and Bown, O. "On Becoming a Teacher." In Teacher Education: The Seventy Fourth NSSE Yearbook. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.

Fuller, F., Parsons, J., and Watkens, J. Concerns of Teachers: Research and Reconceptualization. Austin: University of Texas R&D Center for Teacher Education, 1973.

Gibson, R. "The Effect of School Practice: The Development of Student Perspectives." British Journal of Teacher Education, 2 (1976): 241-50.

Ginsburg, M. and Newman, K. "Socialization of Pre-Service Teachers and the Reproduction/Transformation of Society." A paper presented at the annual AERA meeting, Los Angeles, 1981.

Ginsburg, M. and Newman, K. "Pre-Service Teachers' Evolving Conceptions of Inequalities in Wealth and Power and the Role of Schooling." A paper presented at the annual AERA meeting, New York, 1982.

Giroux, H. "Teacher Education and the Ideology of Social Control." Journal of Education, 162 (1980): 5-27.

Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Chicago: Aldine, 1975.

Insert Author's Name. "Learning to Teach: A Study of a Humanistic Approach." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1982.

Hermanowicz, H. "The Pluralistic World of Beginning Teachers." In The Real World of the Beginning Teacher. Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1966.

Hovey, L. "The Evolution of a Field-Based Elementary Methods Program: Past Problems, Present Status, and Future Directions." A paper presented at the annual NSTA meeting, Philadelphia, 1976.

Iannaccone, L. "Student Teaching: A Transitional Stage in the Making of a Teacher." Theory Into Practice, 2 (1963): 73-80.

Ishler, P. and Kay R. "A Survey of Institutional Practice." In Exploratory Field Experiences in Teacher Education, edited by C. Webb, N. Gehrke, P. Ishler, and A. Mendoza. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators, 1981.

Katz, L. "Developmental Stages of Pre-School Teachers." Elementary School Journal, 73 (1972): 50-4

Kliebard, H. "The Tyler Rationale." School Review, 78 (1970): 259-273.

Kohl, H. On Teaching. New York: Schocken Books, 1976.

Lortie, D. Schoolteacher. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.

Lumpkins, B. "Elementary Education Methods Block and Professional Laboratory Experiences." ERIC Document #ED177101 SP014057, 1979.

Nash, R. and Ducharme. E. "A Future Perspective on Preparing Educators for the Human Service Society: How to Restore a Sense of Social Purpose to Teacher Education." Teachers College Record, 77 (1976): 441-71

Popkewitz, T. "Teacher Education as Socialization: Ideology or Social Mission." A paper presented at the annual AERA meeting, San Francisco, 1979.

Robinson, E. "A Practicum Approach to Elementary School Social Studies Through a Methods Block Structure." A paper presented at the annual NCSS meeting, Cincinnati, 1977.

Smith, B. "On the Content of Teacher Education." In Exploring Issues in Teacher Education: Questions for Future Research, edited by G. Hall, S. Hord, and G. Brown. Austin: University of Texas R&D Center for Teacher Education, 1980.

Stake, R. and Easley, J. Case Studies in Science Education. Urbana, IL: Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation, 1978.

Stratemeyer, F. "Issues in Teacher Education." In Teacher Education for a Free People, edited by D. Cottrell. Oneonta, NY: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1956.

Tabachnick, B. R., Popkewitz, T., and Zeichner, K. "Teacher Education and the Professional Perspectives of Student Teachers." Interchange, 10 (1979-80): 12-29.

Taxel, J. "Sensitizing Students to the Selective Tradition in Children's Literature." A paper presented at the annual AERA meeting, New York, 1982.

Tyler, R. Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950.

Van Manen, M. "Linking Ways of Knowing with Ways of Being Practical." Curriculum Inquiry, 6 (1977): 205-28.

Zeichner, K. "Reflective Teaching and Field-Based Experience in Pre-Service Teacher Education." Interchange, 12 (1981): 1-22.

Zeichner, K. and Teitelbaum, K. "Personalized and Inquiry-Oriented Teacher Education: An Analysis of Two Approaches to the Development of Curriculum for Field-Based Experiences. Journal of Education for Teaching, 8 (1982): 95-117.

Zeigler, H. and Peak, W. "The Political Functions of the Educational System." Sociology of Education, 43 (1970): 129-42.